FURTHER CONFUSION 2010

CALIFORNIA GOLD RUSH

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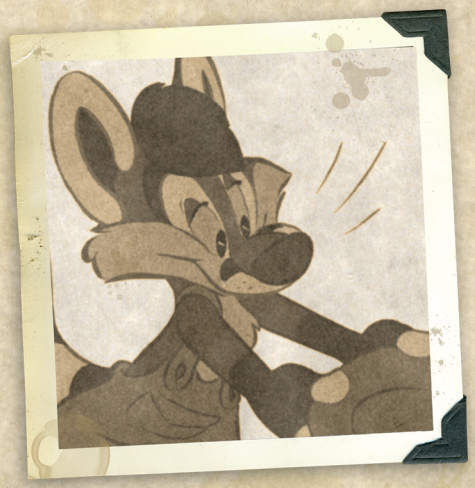
CALIFORNIA



The Fairmont Hotel

Photo frames and borders by Steve Paxton (paxtonprints.com); parchment texture by Dave Bryant (furaffinity.net/user/tomclowder)

January 21-25

GOLD RUSH

PAXTON PORTRAITS

Complete images are presented throughout the program book

San Jose, California

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j@tmbg.org

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saintsimian.com

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flankers-tale.com

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furaffinity.net/user/duroc/

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jlbrandt@wowway.com

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http://comics.com/over_the_hedge/

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metalandmagic.com

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furaffinity.net/user/blondefoxy/

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furaffinity.net/user/brawl/

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rjbartrop.artspots.com

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A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR

We've struck gold! *Gold, I tells ya!*

Yes, this year we've struck gold setting up in the Fairmont. It's worth its weight, set in active downtown San Jose. With more places to eat and more things to do within mere blocks of the hotels, we're pretty excited about attending the con here.

Of course, with the new hotel comes new challenges. We've gone through some growing pains, but nothing you wouldn't expect from moving to someplace new. This place offers us a lot more options on how they can help us, and a lot more space. Figuring out what we want and how has been a challenge in and of itself. We owe a lot to the hard work and dedication of our staff, without whose patience and diligence, we could never hold one of these events. Thanks to all our '49ers this year especially!

We're also excited about seeing all of you here! We can't do it without you. Our attendees sold out the hotel in just a few days, and our overflow hotel is also almost bursting. Thank you for making Fruther Confusion great, not just this year but every year!

We welcome you to this new hotel, new location and new Further Confusion. For those of you who have never attended before, we hope you'll find the Fairmont an excellent "First FC" hotel. We'd like to see you again in the years to come.

Furry Fans Rule!

—Jason "Loran Skunky" Thomas, Chairman
Zack "Nuke Tanuki" King, Vice Chairman
Further Confusion 2010

myFurCon

my.furtherconfusion.org

The social networking site for FurtherConfusion.
Create your own schedule, share it with
your friends, upload images, send messages,
get convention news and information.

Special thanks to IndiCoyote, CryptoDragon, and Inaki.

Several million years ago, give or take a few, a unique geologic event involving huge herds of wild pigs and a mineral spring prone to random and violent eruptions of fiery steam came together, much to the detriment of the pigs. Preserved and delicately spiced with mineral salts, ground fine under the weight of eons, the end result is a unique and deliciously aged sausage, mined at the Carlisle Sausage Mines located in the Cacomistly Mountains.

At the Carlisle Mines, wiry miner cats excavate the valuable sausage ore, or "fat gold," with picks and squeegees. They load it into carts, taking it up several levels to the meat refinery for rapid on-site processing. From there, the famous Carlisle Fossil Sausage is shipped to the nearby town, and goes out to hungry consumers the world over, bearing the motto "Carlisle Fossil Sausage—A Taste of the Ages."

The miner cats unionized some decades past, following an outbreak of the peculiar medical malady known as "sausage lung", and following a strike and the subsequent drop in Carlisle Corp.'s profits (immediately taken up by the Baconsmiths of Snod) the mine was overhauled and modernized, making it today one of the safest mines in the world.

ATTENDEE CODE OF CONDUCT

Further Confusion strives to give as many people as possible a fun time. Most of the convention is for general audiences (young teens or older). We will mark clearly the few areas and events which may exceed a general-audience rating. At registration you may choose to sign an age statement stating that you are eighteen years of age or older. If you choose not to sign this statement, or are not eighteen years of age or older, your badge will be marked and you will be allowed admittance only to those areas or events that are for a general audience. Please be prepared to show your badge at any time you need access to convention space or events—it identifies you as a fully-paid attendee of the convention.

Further Confusion likes to hold itself out as a professional convention. We also hope that each attendee enjoys the fun that our wide-ranging community can provide. Please consider how your actions reflect on the convention and how they may impact or affect others. We take pride in our appearance and we want you to as well, whilst still having fun. To this effect, if the convention becomes aware of any of our attendees engaging in illegal activities, either in convention space or in private hotel rooms, we will be forced to inform the proper authorities.

Although this year we are consuming all of the function space at the hotel, keep in mind that there are always other guests of the hotel, especially on the first floor and lobby areas. Offending the hotel's other guests is inappropriate. Impressing them with how much fun and enthusiasm we have for our fandom *is* appropriate. What you consider to be acceptable behavior may not be so for others. Consideration of others is the hallmark of a mature individual and a healthy fandom. We encourage that courtesy from all participants in our community.

Safety and security matters are generally handled by flare, who are a group of experienced individuals used by Further Confusion and other conventions. Flare can be contacted through Convention Operations (see below) or by asking any of the convention staff. Flare may ask you to stop an activity or to move it to a private room. Repeat offenders may even be required to return their badges and to leave the convention premises. We ask our attendees always to comply with flare's requests promptly. If you feel that flare has made an unfair request, or has not dealt with you in a fair manner, you may bring this up at a later time with the convention chair or vice-chair.

Costumes & Clothing

Use your common sense in public areas. If you have to ask or think twice about doing it in public, take it to your room. For example, kissing and holding hands, regardless of sexual orientation, are fine. Groping, tongue battles, and nudity, regardless of sexual orientation, are not. While collars and leashes may be worn discreetly, blatant displays of bondage or bdsm in public may result in flare asking you to return your badge. No costume is no costume: We ask you to wear at least a shirt, shorts, and shoes in public areas of the hotel.

Body painters should keep shirts handy at all times in case they need to pass through the lobby or other areas that the hotel's other guests might frequent. Additionally, if you are wearing body paint of any kind, please refrain from sitting on hotel furniture. Similarly, the lobby and hotel furniture is *not* the proper place for decorating someone as a tiger. We have a Creator's Lounge that may be used for impromptu makeup demonstrations. Public exposure of genitalia, buttocks or (female) breasts is not permitted. As a rule, a minimum of a non-thong bathing suit must be worn at all times in public areas. "Anatomically correct" costumes must be likewise clothed.

Harassment & Assault

No means *no*. Stop means *stop*. Go away means *go away*. If someone won't understand these simple rules, contact a member of flare. They have the power to remove an attendee's badge for not following these commands. Harassment is any behavior that intentionally annoys or alarms another person. This includes unwanted physical contact, following someone in a public area without a legitimate reason, or threatening physical violence. Offenders may lose their badges and the matter may be referred to the proper law enforcement authorities. If you are being harassed, immediately contact flare, through a nearby staff member or by phoning Convention Operations from any hotel phone and asking for flare. Convention Operations' phone number is in the pocket program or you can dial 0 and ask for Further Confusion Convention Operations.

Buying & Selling

Further Confusion has two main areas where merchandise and services are sold—the Dealer's Room and the Furry Market Place. Anyone who receives payment for goods or services (such as body painting, massage, etc.) in convention space must comply with all the convention's rules regarding this. The Dealer's Room Rules apply in this situation, regardless of the location, and vendors must ensure they have proper California Sales Tax IDs.

If anyone wishes to request payment for goods or services and to donate the proceeds to charity, Further Confusion must be informed of this ahead of time to allow for the convention to organize the correct tax reporting.

Further Confusion takes very seriously its legal obligations in this area. Any solicitation for payment at the convention that does not comply with these obligations may result in the offender losing their badge and being required to return all payments.

Parties, Alcohol, & Zero Drug Tolerance

Further Confusion does not tolerate serving of alcohol to minors. If you are hosting a party where alcohol is being served, it is your responsibility as host to ensure that the age of any-

ATTENDEE CODE OF CONDUCT

one drinking alcohol is checked. You should also designate someone not to drink, so that there is a fully competent person present to deal with any emergencies that might arise.

Further Confusion *does not* tolerate the use of illegal substances. The violation of the above rules could subject you to the immediate loss of your badge and convention privileges and referral of the matter to other authorities.

Water Pistols, Silly String, & Weapons

Due to the potential damage to property, water guns, silly string and the like are prohibited in public areas of the hotel or convention space.

If it looks like a real gun in any way, shape, or form, it should not be brought to the convention. The State of California has recently instituted new state laws regarding replica weapons.

There should be no "live" steel or whips being wielded in any area of the convention. If a bladed weapon or whip is part of your costume, please have it peace-bonded. This can be done at the FLARE Base at any time. If you kill it, you have to eat it!

Photography & Video

Further Confusion wants you to have great memories from a fantastic convention. Photographs and videotape footage by attendees are generally allowed in all common areas of the convention with the exception of the Art Show. Specific rules regarding these matters may exist for selected events. Please consult the program guide at the convention for information relating to specific events. Flash photography will be allowed at the Masquerade.

When photographing or videotaping individuals or costumes, please use common courtesy and ask before photographing them. Please respect their rights if they do not wish to be photographed or videotaped. If someone asks or otherwise indicates (remember many folks in costume do not speak) that they do not wish to be photographed, *do not photograph them*!

Photography or videography for the purpose of sale or publication to the press is expressly forbidden unless written permission has been obtained from AAE, Inc. in accordance with its press policy. Individuals may take pictures and videotapes for private viewing or sharing with friends. We ask our attendees to be courteous to those they wish to take pictures of, especially if you wish to place those pictures or video clips onto a personal Web page or similar Internet archive. In this case, please ask your subjects for their explicit permission to do this.

Attendees should be aware that footage gathered by staff members in public areas of the convention, including events and panels, may be used in a highlights tape and that attendees may appear in that tape without compensation. As mentioned above, please consult the pocket program guide for specific video, audio, and photography restrictions for specific events. Further Confusion will require a release only for footage that is obtained in areas that are not fully public (i.e., private functions and personal interviews).

These rules apply to all attendees (dealers, guests, or any level of regular membership). All members of the press and staff will conform to Further Confusion's press policy and we encourage attendees to become familiar with those rules as well.

If You Need Assistance

Further Confusion has a Convention Operations room, which is staffed night and day throughout the convention. One of their roles is to assist you if you have any problems whilst at the convention. You can find their location and phone number in the pocket program, or you can dial 0 on any internal hotel phone and ask for Further Confusion Convention Operations; they will be happy to help you in any way they can. Remember, we cannot address a problem unless we know about it.

If Convention Operations cannot assist you directly, they will have someone contact you who should be able to. For less urgent matters messages may be left with Convention Operations to be forwarded to executive staff, although it is not usually possible to pass messages on to non-executive staff. As with all messages left with Con Ops, please remember to give details of how, when, and where the recipient can contact you.

Further Confusion has a large staff to handle most aspects of the running of the convention. This allows the Chair and Vice Chair to remain available to talk about any comments or concerns that our attendees bring to them. If you see them around the corridors, feel free to speak to them—even if they appear harried, ensuring our attendees have a good time is one of their primary roles! If you need to contact the convention chair or vice-chair at any other time, you can do this by leaving a message for them at Convention Operations.

Have a fun & safe con!

If you have questions or comments regarding Further Confusion policies, please send email to *info@furtherconfusion.org*.

http://www.furaffinity.net/user/brawl/

Guests of Honor : Sofawolf Press

www.sofawolf.com

Jeff Eddy and Tim Susman started Sofawolf Press in 2000, officially launching the press with the release of *Anthrolations* #1 at Further Confusion in January 2001. Since then, Sofawolf Press has gone on to publish over fifty titles, including graphic novels, anthologies, and full-length novels.

Initially based in Massachusetts, the press moved to St. Paul, Minnesota in January 2002, where Alopex joined the team and eventually became the lead editor for Sofawolf's adult anthology, *Heat*. Mark Brown became the fourth member of the team with the launch of the the Artistic Visions series, *The Art of "Herbie",* in 2003.

Also in 2003, with the assistance of Fred Patten, Sofawolf compiled and released *Best in Show*—a collection of twenty-five previously published short stories, covering many years of fandom history. Both the anthology and the cover illustration by Ursula Vernon went on to win Ursa Major Awards, the first of many such wins for Sofawolf and its contributors.

The publication of the first two novels by Kyell Gold, *Volle* and *Pendant of Fortune,* as well as the first volume of Ursula Vernon's highly acclaimed web-comic *Digger* came in 2005. Both publications helped to bring a whole new group of readers into contact with the Sofawolf Press and their growing catalog of furry titles.

In the summer of 2008 the press reached yet another milestone with the release of *Dog's Days of Summer* by Blotch, their first full-color publication and their fastest-selling title to date. This was followed the next year by the release of Kyell Gold's *Out of Position,* which has received unprecedented acclaim outside of the fandom and has become their fastest-selling novel.

As they enter their tenth year of business, they are looking forward to the release of *Across Thin Ice,* the second full-color graphic novel from Blotch and the first to be intended for all ages.

Guest of Honor : Ursula Vernon

Ursula Vernon is the author and illustrator of *Nurk, Digger,* and a number of other projects, including the latest, the Dragonbreath series from Dial Books. The daughter of an artist, she spent her youth attempting to rebel and become a scientist, but eventually succumbed to the siren song of paint. In addition to writing and making art, Ms. Vernon is "an avid birdwatcher, occasional neophyte practitioner of the sword art of *iaido,* and an amateur thrower of pots." She is active in her local webcomics community, and can occasionally be found at local science fiction conventions, looking vaguely baffled by the crowd and signing anything put in front of her.

GUESTS OF HONOR • MICHAEL FRY, T. LEWIS

Michael Fry has been a professional cartoonist and writer for over twenty-five years. He has produced four internationally syndicated comic strips, including the current *Over the Hedge* (writer with T. Lewis illustrating) for United Media. *Over the Hedge* runs in over 130 newspapers, including the *New York Daily News, Austin American-Statesman, Portland Oregonian, Dallas Morning News, Stars and Stripes* and others. *Hedge* also appears daily on the web at www.comics.com.

Over the Hedge was released May 19, 2006 as a CGI animated feature produced by DreamWorks Animation with the lead voices of Bruce Willis, Garry Shandling and Steve Carell. Tim Johnson (*Antz*) and Karey Kirkpatrick (*Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*) directed with Bonnie Arnold (*Toy Story, Tarzan*) producing and Jim Cox (*Ferngully*) co-executive producing. Fry (with Lewis) was a creative consultant.

Over the Hedge earned $336 million in worldwide box office and has sold over 15 million DVDs.

The feature was previously in development at Fox Family films where Fry (with Lewis) co-wrote the original screenplay.

In 2006 the *Over the Hedge* comic was nominated for Best Newspaper Strip by the National Cartoonists Society.

Fry is also a co-founder of RingTales, a new media company that animates print comics for all digital media. RingTales produces short (fifteen- to thirty-second) ad-supported animations for all digital media. RingTales has the exclusive rights to animate *Dilbert* and the cartoons of *The New Yorker* as well as several other cartoon properties including *Over the Hedge, Bloom County, Pooch Café* and *Cul de Sac*. RingTales animations have been viewed over 135 million times since March '07 through on-line distributors such as iTunes, YouTube, MSN, Newyorker.com, Dilbert.com and many other sites.

Fry also executive produced the prime-time animated series *Committed* based on his previously syndicated strip of the same name. Catherine O'Hara, Eugene Levy, Andrea Martin and Dave Foley provided lead voices. The show debuted in Canada in March 2001 on CTV. In the US, *Committed* debuted on the WE: Women's Entertainment network in October 2002. *Committed* was nominated for Outstanding Series for All Audience at the 2001 Cartoons on the Bay Television Animation Awards.

Fry has had eight books published, including several anthologies of *Commited* and *Over the Hedge*. A forth edition of *Hedge, Over the Hedge: Stuffed Animals,* was published in May 2006.

Fry lives on a small ranch near Austin, Texas with his wife, Kim; two daughters, Sarah and Emily; dogs Max and Jack; and a dozen or so unnamed shrub-eating cows.

T. Lewis was born in Texas and has lived in such exotic places as Africa, Switzerland and Alaska. He holds a bachelor of fine arts degree from North Texas State University, where he had his first comics published. Lewis has illustrated fourteen children's books so far, including *Peter Pan* (Troll Associates, 1988), *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (Calico Books, 1988) and *Cinderella, the Untold Story* (Birch Lane Press, 1990). Lewis was also the artist for the *Mickey Mouse* comic strip for King Features Syndicate and Walt Disney Productions. Together with Michael Fry, he created *Over the Hedge* in 1995. *Over the Hedge* successfully filled the spot left vacant when *Calvin and Hobbes* ended its syndication. He has received the National Cartoonist Society Book Illustration Award for 1999. He illustrates the comic strip *Over the Hedge*. Lewis worked for Disney on the *Mickey Mouse* comic books in the early '90s, where he met Michael Fry, his future collaborator on *Over the Hedge*.

TOUCH MY BADGER '09

RJ BARTROP
'09

AAE & VARIETY TRACK

AAE & Variety Track

AAE Public Meeting Anthropomorphic Arts and Education, the non-profit agency hosting Further Confusion, holds an annual public meeting at the convention on Sunday.

Hiss 'n' Purr This is your chance to give FC10 feedback on what was hot and what was not, so that the staff can work on things for FC11.

Kaffeeklatch With Fry and Lewis A chance to enjoy coffee and conversation with our guests of honor, Michael Fry and T. Lewis, in a more intimate setting. Spaces limited.

Kaffeeklatch With Sofawolf Press A chance to enjoy coffee and conversation with our guests of honor, the founders of Sofawolf Press, in a more intimate setting. Spaces limited.

Kaffeeklatch With Ursula Vernon A chance to enjoy coffee and conversation with our guest of honor, Ursula Vernon, in a more intimate setting. Spaces limited.

Opening Ceremonies Join the Further Confusion 2010 staff to kick off the convention with our opening ceremonies celebration.

Art Track

Anthropomorphic Sculpture Learn sculpting, including use of additive and subtractive construction, using armatures, building up and out from a central mass, and how the various materials inform the finished work. Materials will include wire mesh, *papier-mâché,* and oil- and water-based clays. Some attention will be given to surface treatment as an important component of the finished piece.

Artpocalypse For the second year the Artpocalypse will descend on artists, challenging them as never before. Join Gogh Cheetah as he gets all emo on artists and subjects them to his tormented challenges in a twisted Iron Artist-style event. Audience members are encouraged to join in on the fun.

Business Practices for Artists 1 "Convention Business Operations for Creators" is a comedy skit about running a dealers' den table.

Business Practices for Artists 2 "Bookkeeping for Creators" (not to be confused with "creative bookkeeping") focuses on basic bookkeeping and busting myths—*e.g.,* many artists think they don't have to report income from commissions on their taxes if they are hobbyists and not businesses.

Colored Marker and Pencil Katie "Wolf Nymph" Hofgard will demonstrate how to blend markers and colored pencil in a quick, seamless technique with smooth, brilliant results. If you want to try markers, but are hesitant to spend the money without knowing how to use them, this live tutorial will help you get started.

Copyright & You The truth about copyright. Learn what your rights are as a creator and how to protect them.

Digital Zone: 3D Programs Learn the latest and best tips and tricks in 3D Studio Max.

Digital Zone: Illustrator Introduction to and tips and tricks for Adobe Illustrator.

Digital Zone: Photoshop Learn the latest and best tips and tricks in Adobe Photoshop.

ART TRACK

Digital Zone: Storyboarding/Animatics An introduction to digital storyboarding and animatics.

Figurine Sculpture Learn figurine sculpting with Ruben Avila as he takes you through the various steps and demonstrates with his current projects.

Fry and Lewis: Hedges and Trails Join our guests of honor and a moderator as we examine the history of their work and get them to really dish on their most famous creations.

Fry and Lewis: Retrospective and Futures Join our guests of honor and a moderator as we examine what's next in the artistic and entertainment futures of our multi-talented guests.

Gold Leaf How to use gold leaf in paintings, illustrations, and modeling. Accent your art with real gold leaf in this demonstration.

Gold-Rush-Era Art (and History) A survey of artistic styles and expression from the period.

High-Tech Tools in Artistic Expression TechShop introduction: high-tech tools in artistic expression. Monocerous Studio: building the high-tech studio.

Life Drawing: Models Life drawing session covering the human figure. Models wearing nothing to form-fitting Lycra pose for sketch exercises.

Life Drawing: Objects Life drawing session covering artifacts and background objects from the gold-rush era.

Making Digital Art on the Cheap No money for Photoshop? *No problem!* You don't need a high-powered rig to make digital artwork—or the expensive software. From Gimp in Windows to Ubuntu Linux, Keenspot's Kelly "STrRedWolf" Price will show you what open-source software has to offer.

Manga Studio: Front to Back Join Astolpho for a walk-through of the interface and tools of Manga Studio 4. He also demonstrates the methods he uses for the creation of his online comic *The Dawn Chapel,* found at dawnchapel.com. If you can, be sure to bring a laptop and a tablet to follow along!

Poses and Expressions Having difficulty making your art come alive? Come let us help you with poses and expressions and liven up your art.

Ursula Vernon Q&A Join our guest of honor and a moderator as we examine the history of her work and get her to really dish on her most famous creations.

Web Comics How-to Think you're better than Mike Fry and T. Lewis? Well, get your pencils and pens ready. Keenspot's Kelly "STrRedWolf" Price will help you get you started, from background and plot to layout and design. Be on the lookout for other comic artists to boot!

FURSUIT TRACK

Fursuit Track

Advanced Bodysuit Construction This is a follow up to our beginner panel and covers some more challenging designs and ideas. Digitigrade legs, padding, muscle suits, and non-traditional body shapes will be some of the topics covered.

Advanced Head Construction Geared toward people wanting to hone their skills after completing their first costumes. This panel covers advanced techniques and materials such as airbrushing, casting, latex, and Fiberglas. We also cover how keep your character on model as you go from 2D to 3D.

Basic Bodysuit Construction Another class for the beginner costumer. Learn how to pattern, tailor, and create your first bodysuit, paws and tails.

Basic Head Construction Covers the basics of design and construction, how to purchase materials, and getting started on a first-time project.

Costumes 101 Interested in getting into costuming? What's it like to wear a giant fuzzy parka? We'll go over the basics of wearing, caring for, and traveling with costumes.

Critterlympics Back again this year, Critterlympics sics costume against costume in a test of skill and endurance!

Exotic Materials (and Using Them Safely) Covers different foams, furs (including NFT), adhesives (plus safety information), coatings, and structure. We also cover how to use them effectively and how to put on a large show-and-touch display.

Furry Night Live FNL features a live MC and a multitude of live furry stage and video performances competing for the Audience Choice Awards. Come vote for your favorite act and see who walks away with the cash prizes at the end of the show. *Note:* Interested participants must attend the dress rehearsal on Saturday and the tech rehearsal before the show.

Furry Night Live Dress Rehearsal *(participants only)* Mandatory pre-show rehearsal for FNL. We will be doing a complete show run-through. Acts must appear at this rehearsal or they will be stricken from the roster. Interested participants who have not otherwise turned in their participation forms should first attend the dress rehearsal.

Fursuit Dance Lessons Do you have two left paws? Want to break away from all the wallflowers? Learn to strut your stuff on the dance floor with some hands-on lessons from our talented critter crew.

Fursuit Lounge Come in, cool down, and relax in our fursuit lounge! Drinks and snacks will be available, as well as a station to repair any "wardrobe malfunctions". Enjoy!

Fursuit Performance Now that you have a costume, you'll want to develop an expressive personality and character to match. We'll help you get moving, acting, and learning how to work with the crowds and get people pumped.

Masquerade Have a fursuit? Come show it off here. Want to see what everyone's been making over the past year? Come see their hard work. Join us for our annual Further Confusion masquerade!

Masquerade Sign-Up and Judging Come show everyone your new costume! Masquerade information and paperwork for sign-ups will be available, and costumes will be pre-judged.

GAMING TRACK

Gaming Track

Furoticon *(adults only)* *Furoticon* (*Furo* for short) is a new adult-rated furry trading card game. It was released July 2009 at Anthrocon. Its creator will be on hand to demonstrate playing the game.

SCIENCE TRACK

Science Track

Anatomy and Art It is important to understand anatomy when working with art in any form. This panel will discuss anatomical issues related to art from a biological view.

Furry Ham Radio Amateur or "ham" radio has been around for decades. Even with the advent of the Internet, it remains of interest to a dedicated subset of the population.

Gold Rush in Space Space is where we must go to fulfill our potential and find our destiny. This series of panels, "Gold Rush I", "Gold Rush II", and "Mining Camp/Claim Jumpers", will discuss what has kept commercial development of space from happening, what has changed that will make this opportunity imminent, and what must happen to make *this* gold rush succeed.

Live Animal Presentation The Wild Cat Education and Conservation Fund, also known as Leopards Etc., will return this year for two live presentations. The goal of the Fund is to educate the public about the decreasing population of wild cat species around the world, provide funding for worldwide wild cat conservation projects, and offer safe refuge for captive wild cats. Donations to the Fund can go directly to a specific conservation partner or to the general fund for support of the ambassador cats and educational efforts.

Science of World Building When creating worlds for writing, comics, or any form of fiction, it's important to get the science right. We will discuss the issues around building realistic worlds. Five published authors with real science backgrounds will be ready to share their experiences with you.

Second Life *Second Life* is an online world like many of the multi-player online RPGs, except that there is no gaming beyond social interaction. There is a growing furry community on *Second Life,* which will be discussed at this panel.

SOCIAL TRACK

Social Track

Bass Grooves An alternative-style dance featuring your favorite drum and bass, dubstep, hip hop, and more. For those who like it a little harder and dirtier than the usual dance.

Capoeira for Furs Come learn the basics of capoeira, an art form that combines elements of martial arts, music, and dance. Learn some basic moves that you can practice later at home or break out on the dance floor. Prepare to be active and wear loose-fitting clothes.

Chill Lounge Come and listen to some chill, relaxed music. Featuring the best downtempo, ambient, and chill-out music from our favorite DJs.

Coffee, Tea, and Memes Come see the panelists hold forth on nearly every subject under the sun, including topics suggested by the audience. Listen to anecdotes, discussion, and debate, and put in your two cents' worth—but keep it short, because a new topic will be up in just a few minutes! Modest refreshments will be provided.

Dead-Dog Dance Once again, we say farewell to another year at Further Confusion. Come join us for one last dance and another chance to say goodbye to all your many new friends.

Desserts to Die For Come enjoy our traditional dessert social.

Flowology Toy Workshop Workshop designed to focus on getting in touch with the body again, with the aid of a few tools—one being poi! Come learn, play, and explore a fun and challenging way to get in tune with your body through the art of poi, hoop, and fire dancing. We will provide sock poi for you to use, but if you bring your own, more power to you!

Friday Night Dance *(fursuit dance)* Everyone is welcome at this dance where fursuiters are the stars! Come shake your tail on the dance floor with a score of other critters. Our favorite DJs will be playing all kinds of retro hits. Expect to hear everything from rare disco grooves to some old school new wave goth, as well as all kinds of great music from the '70s, '80s, and '90s.

Fursuit Dance Competition Who has the best dance moves in the fandom? Come and find out! Fursuiters can come at the beginning of the panel to sign up for the competition. Bring your own song to dance to, either on CD or on a flash drive in MP-3 format.

Improv Workshop Bring your wits and sense of humor for this audience-participation improv workshop.

Losers on Stage II—Stand Up Comedy Show Kigs and company return for a second year at Further Confusion. Expect audience participation!

Meet the Guests Who are these guests of honor? And what makes them so honorable, anyway? This panel answers those questions and others you might have about this year's honorees.

Musical Performance With Funk the Band Come shake your tail to the groovin' sounds of the local rock group Funk the Band. A high-energy group playing ska, funk, and rock, these guys are sure to get you dancing.

Opening Night Dance Immediatly following the opening ceremonies, come join us for a celebration of dance and music. Reconnect with all your old friends while making some new ones.

Saturday Night Dance Come dance the night away to the finest furry DJs playing the best in electronic dance music. This is not just a dance, but a full multimedia extravaganza featuring music, video, art, and performance. Be sure not to miss it. And yes, fursuits are always welcome and enjoyed!

Sunday Night Dance And once again, we dance! Come join us for another great night featuring even more talented DJs playing the best electronic dance music. And yes, we love fursuits and welcome them to join us!

SPECIES TRACK

Species Track

Aquatic Furs "Aquatic" means all you otters, seals, polar bears, penguins, and beavers as well as all sea-going mammals of any species!

Avian Panel Birds of a feather flock to this panel!

Bunnies! Panel For all you hares, cottontails, and jacks out there!

Canines Domesticated, wild, or not-well-known species—all are welcome!

Created Species Anyone whose character is a species they created that's new to the world—this is for you!

Dragon Panel All you scalies out there who call themselves dragons, come and meet one another at this fiery panel!

Feline Panel Spots, stripes, or both! All species, extinct or not, are welcome!

Four on the Floor For all you quads out there!

Gryphon Panel Are you an ancient and noble species of the half-bird–half-feline kind? This panel is for you! PS: hippogriffs and lupogriffs are welcome too!

Hybrids For all of you who could never choose just one species.

Mustelids You know who you are!

Rodentia All of you small furry critters, come on in!

Ungulates Hooved bretheren gather here!

SPIRITUALITY TRACK

Spirituality Track

Buddhism Panel A discussion of the basics of Buddhism, with a short meditation session to follow.

Furry Christianity A chance for furry Christians to get together and discuss matters of faith.

Norse Spirituality A discussion of Norse spirituality and how it intersects with the fandom.

Spirituality Roundtable People from various faiths and traditions are encouraged to get together to discuss similarities and differences with each other.

Totemism A discussion and workshop focusing on totems and how they're featured in various traditions.

WRITING TRACK

Writing Track

Characterization Workshop Characterization is the heart of modern fiction. Come listen to experienced writers discuss the topic of general characterization in fiction.

Fashion Tails Fashion can encompass any body covering or decoration. Aside from practicalities such as cleanliness or environmental protection, it sends social signals to one's fellows: status, class, beauty, ethnicity, religion, political affiliation, or a host of others. A good world-builder should put considerable thought into sartorial fads and traditions, and can use them to great effect in scene-setting.

Flash Fiction Making every word count is important in fiction, and the shorter the work, the more important that is. Come and hear about, and possibly take some time to write your own, flash fiction—stories of 100–200 words.

Are you an artist or a client who needs scans of your convention sketches before you head for home?

You can get them.

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Gold Rush Characterization Workshop Every period of history is distinctive, with its own outlooks and mannerisms. Learn about the particulars of this rough-and-tumble time and place.

History of Furry Publications Join a few greymuzzles and look back at how this whole publication thing started, from the old days of *Vootie* and *Rowrbrazzle* to Sofawolf and FurPlanet. We'll talk about how some publications evolved from others, what helped some succeed, and where we're going from here.

How to Make Your Stories Furry Writing a furry story is easy, right? "Once there was a fox who . . ." But furry stories are more than just characters with ears and tails. Talk to some authors with years of experience in building furry worlds and creating furry stories to discuss where the line is between "humans in animal suits" and "mentioning species in every sentence" so that your stories can be as furry as you want them to be.

How to Stop Thinking About Writing and Start Writing All of us at one time or another have considered writing, whether fiction or non-, short or long. But going from that to getting a written piece finished is an often-baffling process. Procrastination, writer's block, and many other hazards stand in your way. How to navigate the uncharted waters of getting your idea completed? Ask a couple of writers who have been through the process several times.

How to Submit for Publication Okay, you've written your story. How do you give yourself the best chance of getting it published? We'll talk about how to get ready to submit, how to prepare your work for submission, and even what you need to do after submitting.

How to Write Dialog That Doesn't Sound Like You Wrote It Real speech does not sound at all like good written exposition. Come hear tips on how to write dialog that sounds natural, the way your characters actually would talk.

Kyell Gold Reading Kyell Gold will read from an upcoming book and answer questions about his newly-released novel, *Shadow of the Father,* as well as any other topics people care to bring up.

WRITING TRACK

Q&A with Sofawolf Press Meet the four founding members of Sofawolf Press as they present a brief introduction to the company and a look into their plans for the future. There will be plenty of time for questions and answers, so bring your curiosity about the press, their publications, or the business aspects of Furry publishing.

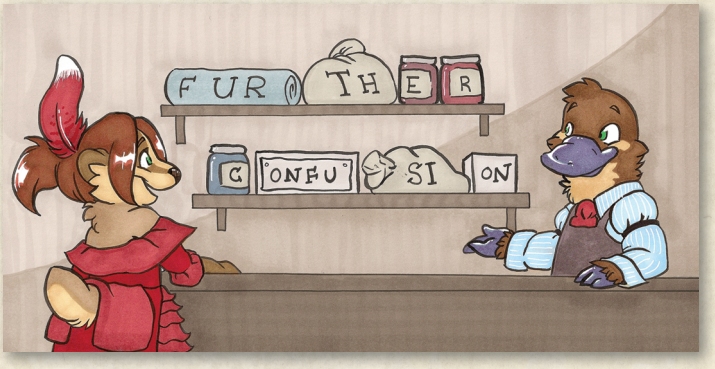
Where Does It Come From? Your mastermind villain dominates the land from his castle of solid iron atop dank dungeons and armories deep in the earth. Who mined all that iron, and where was it smelted? How was that cubic mile of dirt hauled away, and why didn't anyone notice? A good world-builder should be able to answer questions about the origins and implications of characters, artifacts, and infrastructure.

Writer's Workshop Stuck in a rut for a story? Need some advice on how to get over writer's block? Whatever the case may be, come on in and we'll do our best to get ya out of that rut or bust through that block. In any case, stop on by! Ya might learn somethin' new!

Writing Furry Erotica for a General Audience Writing for a general romance or erotica publication such as Sofawolf Press's magazine *Heat* is often different from writing stories to share with others who have the same sexual orientation and fetishes as you do. Learn what to do and what not to do to increase the chance of your submission being selected for publication.

Writing Resources In this panel, everyone is invited to share what writing resources we know of, either in or out of print, online, or in person. Come share resources you know and find others.

BADGE-ART SHOWCASE

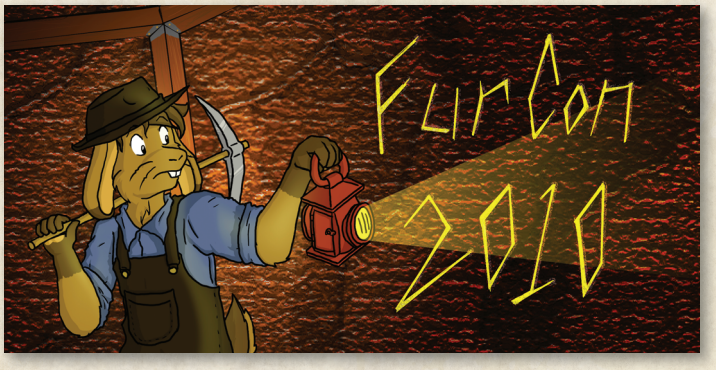


Touch My Badger
www.furaffinity.net/user/touchmybadger

Jimmy Chin

Murrahnithahn-i-ia **www.alien-eyes.com**

Ponygirl **www.studiocute.com**



Lou "FrostDemn" Mercado
www.furaffinity.net/user/frostdemn

Tessa Thornberry

BARON ENGEL 09

LITTLE WAH AND THE GOLDEN DRAGON'S ROAR

by Jay Blanc

It had been unusual, but there it was. The biggest bundles of silks and tea we had ever carried, according Fat Ned. The pangolin stevedore said bigger than seen since afore the John Company had bested ol' Dàoguāng. And not bound for London or Antwerp, but a little town on the Californias called San Francisco. And such as I heard of that place but rumour, of gold laying in the hills for anyone to take. Fat Ned said made his scales shiver, and would that he could jump ship to see it. But that were beyond a little panda deckboy, not hardly learnt his letters, and still called Little Wah. So the mighty little clipper ship left Hong Kong in the spring of '49 to venture its wares and amidst tall tales of fortune.

Such matter of market and trade were then beyond Little Wah, and far beyond rank of little deckboy. Was many year now since Little Wah had traded life in muddy field for life on open sea. And Ship Master knew where men had money, they wanted their fine silks and teas to spend it on, could feel it in his hooves he said, the sea telling him where money was running. So he would take his ship to the California with much to sell those who were sure to have riches. And little Wah-Tak Au went with him.

John Sutter discovered his own downfall. On the West Coast, in land once ruled by Spain, he set out to create a agricultural utopia and raise the French flag above Fort Sutter. It was not to be. His fort was seized by the United States, and his quest led many settlers to deaths on the harsh trails across the Sierra. But worse was to come.

On January 24, 1848, gold was discovered on his land. Fearing for his land, Sutter kept everything secret. But newspaper owner and merchant Samuel Brannan had heard the gossip, and went up to check for himself. On returning, he set up a store filled with prospecting supplies and mining equipment, then announced that gold had been found in Sutter's Mill. Within a year, the whole world knew of the gold in California. His lands overrun by prospectors and near everything he had built destroyed, John Sutter was ruined.

San Francisco docks were full of ships, a long queue to get a berth at dock if you could get one at all. New piers and docks being built quickly to take in more ships. And on the hills there were tents stretched out into city of canvas. It was as if a city had emptied out all its people onto the little town, and they had all taken to building anew.

Big Bull Bos'n James shook his head at some of the ships. Could not have been in port for a few months, yet were in a horrid state. Some had taken a beating in a storm, but many just seemed raggedy with neglect. It was not till we had been in port two day that we found out why. His ear twitched, with the annoyance he kept for when deckboy took too long on scrubbing. "Slack crews did toll of damage there, Little Wah. I'll mark my hide before I see your slackness make damage toll here too," he said, and clipped my ear for stopping to watch when I had my working to do. "I see you tardy, and I'll shave you down to your hide and mark *it* instead."

That morning as Master started to make the lists for the return journey, half the crew did not sign back on, if they even came back to say so at all. So be it, says Master, and posts listing for hands at the dock. And not a soul did take up. The gold in the hills had the men now, not the ships. Why be cold and wet at sea, those hills sang, come to us and take a better bounty.

And now Bos'n James and even Master knew with despair why the ships at dock were so raggedy and unrepair'd.

For they had no men.

News spread across the Americas in '48, and settlers calling themselves "The Argonauts" came to San Francisco, then sent word confirming that there were gold in the hills. News continued to spread outward, till in '49 it had become the first "world-class" gold rush. And the influx of people to the area put great demands on San Francisco, which had till then only had a thousand people living in it. These demands drew in the trade ships, bearing goods from China and India. And once those ships reached San Francisco, many would not return, as their crews abandoned seafaring to take up prospecting. The ships lay abandoned in the harbours, their owners gaving up on them. Many were broken up for the timber to build expanding San Francisco.

Master would rather have had his arms and antlers broken than watch his ship torn 'part for making of an inn and stable. Both he an' Bos'n were signed up to rival ship rather than see such, and left behind the deckboys, most of would rather go out to answer call of the gold. And sad to say as Little Wah I were among them.

At first, life was good out in the fields, and found myself quickly with a band of countrymen, soon busy with back and forth. Going day on with buckets of silt water to pour into pans my new friends shook to find the little nuggets of gold that were hidden in stream beds and river mud. And pretty soon, we had not just enough to keep ourselves well fed, but our group bought set of big sluices. Then set claim on a stream bed and there had a little prospectors' camp of our own.

Was hard work, but better than the seas storm boxing your ears and salt in your fur. Life was good then for a season.

As the Gold Rush became worldwide, the new prospectors took on the name "Miner Forty-Niners", and most of them took up "placer mining". Commonly thought of as "panning for gold", placer mining is collection of gold deposits from sediment left from rivers. As the least labour-intensive form of gold mining, it was the primary method of gold mining during the start of the gold rush. Placer mining was also very popular because of the unique situation of Northern California at the time, as a recently acquired "US Territory" with no formal land laws, taxes, licensing or private property. Gold was quite literally, "there for the taking". Miners instead adopted the common law of Mexico, that a "claim" could be "staked" for mining of gold by those willing to mine it. If the claim holder could no longer mine it, then it was deemed abandoned. It was a legitimately viewed process to "claim jump" abandoned sites, and was a common practice. Many prospectors would abandon sites they felt were not producing enough gold, in an attempt to find larger yields. However, it was not until 1866 that this process was formally legalised, and disputes over claims were often handled without any rule of law.

Life was not so good the next season.

A "committee" of the local miners came one noon to our camp. An angry tall boar shouting out for someone who spoke Spanish or English. Kicking back and forth at the ground, while he snorted.

The tall boar glared at me when the others pushed me forward. "You speak English, yes?" he grunted out, his own accent tinged with Dutch recognised from the silk and tea routes. "We were here first. This is land for us, not you," he said, pointing to the hill and the stream. "We had good claim first here."

I approached a little slowly, hat held to chest. "Good sir, saw no sign of a claim," I started to say, head bowed and ears flat. "Was bare land, no marks . . ."

"We had good claim here." He said again, this time paw at his hip. "You say you have claim, not true. We here first. It is so."

"Perhaps, we talk and . . ."

"It is so," he snorted again. "We come back two days. You not be here then."

We did not have that wait for two days.

Instead, that night, they came back.

"Foreign miners" would suffer the a great disadvantage in disputes, as prior settlers and "Americans" sought to claim supremacy over later Latin American and Chinese immigrants. Not only would prospectors organise attacks and intimidation against them, so would the law. In 1852 the new California Legislature established a "foreign miners tax" of three dollars a month, half the income of a Chinese immigrant. Tax collectors were privately hired, and often demanded much more than the legal tax, then bring violent retribution against those who did not pay. But by far, the worst to suffer were the Native Americans. Placer mining, damming, and blasting would drive them out of their land, and destroy their hunting, fishing and food-gathering areas. In an attempt to protect themselves from these invasions, some tribes retaliated with violence against mining settlements, but would be quickly outgunned and massacred. The survivors were slowly starved out by the mining settlements' drastic changes to their environment.

They came dressed as Indians on the night. Shooting mules, and tipping over wagons. Lighting off black-powder charge so thought were under bombardment, then setting fire to the tents after all fled.

It is by grace none were injured, but shameful to say it but we ran far as could that night, not even looking behind. If we had not fled, think they would have cut us down where we stood, and blamed it on the savage natives. We lost almost everything left in the camp, all burnt or looted when come creeping back the morning. We spied back once more a day on, they had blasted out rocks to dam up the stream; band of six men setting up larger sluices and pumps'd brought in, while four stood around with rifles to protect "claim". More roars of black powder came as blasted up boulders, then hauled rubble into the mighty sluices. They were quick to make mark on the land, and soon would get to work on turning much of that place into rubble to feed into hungry sluices.

As for I, I knew when beaten, there was no land for Little Wah here any more.

Placer mining operations became more complex—in some cases, streams and even rivers being diverted into artificial sluices for

stretches, while the bed of the river was then dug up. Quartz-bearing rock would be directly mined for its potential gold content, by blasting or with picks. Mercrury would be used to leach gold from rocks, substantial amounts seeping into the rivers. Blasting in particular was difficult and dangerous. Dynamite would not be invented till 1866, and while nitroglycerine had been known of by 1847, it wasn't used in California till 1866, for the construction of the railway passes. Black powder was still the only suitable explosive for mining purposes. But by the Gold Rush, the safety of black-powder charges had been increased somewhat with the development of blasting caps, with the first commercial production of electrical charge blasting caps in the US by Benjamn Franklin in the 1750s.

"You may as well go back to China for it," said the goose in the queue.

El Pueblo de San José de Guadalupe had been growing as much as San Francisco. Good grace had provided San José with a cinnabar mine, just a year before the gold was found. Now it was a city floating in mercury.

Well, floating in mud. It may have been a prosperous time for the capital city of this new California, but it was a very wet winter, and the streets were muddy. And the queues for the laundry were long. "I say, you may as well go back to China for the laundry the time we're standing here," said the goose again, looking pleased as Punch at his joke. It was the eighteenth time I had heard that in a week. It was not all that amusing the first time. But this time it gave a little glimmer of an idea. Not a particularly original idea, not a dashing idea, not an idea you'd intentionally cross an ocean for. But an idea all the same. And one that Little Wah I took.

Starting as a small Mexican settlement and made prosperous by the demand for its mercury production, San Jose was the first incorporated city following California's admission into the United States, and acted as its state capital until the legislature moved to Velejo in 1852, then Benicia in 1853, then settling on Sacramento in 1854. The location of the San Jose legislature is now marked by the Circle of Palms Plaza.

It is a common myth that San Francisco had its laundry shipped over to China since it was cheaper and quicker, but laundries and the other support and service businesses were booming during the Gold Rush. Foreign immigrants could find work there, when they where excluded from the gold fields. And the gold rush also saw a rise in independent women, as young wives became widows either on the harsh trails to the west, or from accident or attacks in California. This led to many women earning a living, and becoming established in California's work force.

And yes, took the little gold I had left from the hills, and came back to where first arrived in this land. And even bought much timber from my old ship. And bought a big copper tub and rollers and all of the things I needed. And so, my child, that is how Little Wah became Fat Old Wah Tak Au, with his own Chinese laundry, and who made more gold from washing dirt than he ever saw from panning dirt.

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Registration Staff	Gabe Sickel	KhordKitty
Registration Staff	Lisa Seelye	Catstrich
Registration, Pre-con	Jo Maurer	Mhari Lindhaven

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Convention Photog.	Ashley Kitto	Kreggan
Convention Photog.	Tor Amundson	Tugrik
Critterlympics	Brian Hagen	Penh Gwyn
Furry Night Live Lead		Higgins Dragon

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Fursuit Lounge Staff	Trevor Johns	Moka
Fursuit Lounge Staff	Zak Nilsson	Xaqtly
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Masquerade Den-Mom	Keith Jones	IMWeasel
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Party Maven		Sasho Windfeather

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KRAHNOS
09

THE PERFECT BUST OF JAMES K. POLK

by Saint Simian

West heard the whistling before he'd even caught sight of the sparrow. He was crouching before the fire and holding up a pewter plate to catch what he could of his reflection. He brushed his fur with his fingers and scratched down the curve of his neck, wondering at the sudden ache in his jaw. He stretched. West noticed uncomfortably that when he squinted he could feel his gums protrude and feel the bone beneath them.

That was when he heard the sparrow whistling. The notes flitted across the scale with the speed of a bubbling stream. At this hour of the night West had no chance of seeing him. All he could discern were the quick, melodic movements, never pausing for long before spinning a new strand. The sparrow moved through the forest. His sounds became more distant when he hid behind trees and hills, but sometimes he sounded so clear that West could swear the sparrow was there beside him.

He tossed another log on the fire, hoping to attract the stranger. He stood close to the blaze, then turned away to feel the cool air on his face and the fire at his back. A tree rustled in front of him and West felt safer now he realized the stranger was moving further away. With most of his opportunity gone, West felt obliged to find the stranger. He climbed the tree quickly, digging his claws into the bark and launching himself up the branches until he had a view over the forest.

The firelight illuminated the base of the tree, but its light could not penetrate far beyond. West's eyes were blinded from the light of his fire, but by measures they adapted to the moonlight. Now he could see the shadows of trees and hills more clearly, though not clearly enough to make out the shapes of the living things amongst them. The sparrow could be anywhere. West rested in a comfortable fork between two branches and used his ample tail as padding. He was warm from the climb and the heat of the fire rose to meet him. He drifted off between the branches. As he closed his eyes he thought he saw a flicker between his eyelids, something disturbing the moonlight. But at that hour and that distance it could have been anything.

It was close to lunch when West finally woke. His head felt fuzzy, but well rested. The fire was burning down, just a few sleepy embers slowly leaking the rest of their heat. West climbed down the tree, threw a few logs onto the fire and stoked the embers to cook his breakfast. The day was already warm, but the smell of burning wood and roasting walnuts put him at his ease. It was mid-afternoon before West wandered away from his campsite. It felt like a day lost, but a day well spent.

West came down out of the hills to the main road. There was a farm on one side bounded by a fence of rotting planks tearing away from rusty nails. In the middle of the expanse stood a farmer pounding a new stake into the ground.

"Hey!" called West. "Mister! This your stretch of land?"

The farmer looked up when he heard West call. "This sure is my farm, but that land over the road ain't been claimed."

"So good for prospecting," said West, "good land for gold."

The farmer cackled and West could hear the dust rattling in his lungs. "Ain't been no gold diggers out this way for decades. That land's been dug clean dry. 'Sides, you're a squirrel, you ain't right for digging. Got no strength in your arms."

"I heard a sparrow out on the goldfields last night. If a sparrow can dig, so can I."

The old farmer stopped and looked up. He wiped the sweat away from his face with the back of his hand and rested his arm on the fence. "That sparrow ain't digging, boy. You heard Kid Sanderson, lives up in them hills. Makes himself scarce nowadays, only steps out onta the goldfields at night. Spoiling for bad luck."

"Is he a poacher or what?"

The farmer put down his mallet and set his hat further back on his head. He regarded West with smiling eyes and a broad, rotting smile. "The Sandersons came outta Tennessee in '49," he said slyly. "Uncle Sanderson and his nephew Kid out to find their fortunes. Uncle was a magpie, tall kinda feller, feathers that shone like polished stone. He had the kind of eyes that held you so tight you couldn't look away.

"An Indian girl used to live in a hidden valley an' spoke a language only she could understand. Local boys used to say she were a witch. I was just a kid at the time, but I was old enough to remember the only time I saw her." The farmer suddenly

grew sullen. "She were the most beautiful woman I ever seen. She was on the goldfields the day Sanderson turned up, an' outta all the diggers in the whole darn world she walked right up to him and looked into his black, sparkling eyes."

"What did she say?"

"Son, in fifty years I have never figured that out. She whispered something in his ear—dunno if it were some encouraging words, or if it were the future. I always thought, even to this day, she warned him away. But there's one thing I do know for sure. When she looked inta his eyes, she knew Sanderson was gonna find his fortune.

"An' those eyes was fixed on nothing else. It were the reason he came all this way, it were his destiny. That man knew he was gonna strike it big and go home a millionaire. But he knew he couldn't do it alone, so he took the only member of his family that'd follow him on a fool's venture—his nephew Kid. Kid was still wide-eyed enough to think the world of his family, but there was one man he admired more 'n anyone else. He loved his uncle so much he'd follow him to the ends of the earth, and so he did.

"But Uncle Sanderson weren't any kinda example to that kid. He dragged him to California and staked his claim. Kid hated it. He was used to farm work, but all that digging and panning made him miserable. Kid kept quiet out of respect for his uncle, who was driven more and more to find the fortune he was sure was waiting. He dreamed of one gold nugget the size of a man's head that would make him rich and let him retire in luxury, swinging with them height society types an' drinking whiskey out of a glass. Course Uncle let Kid do most of the work. Kid scratched at the ground day and night while his uncle stalked across the goldfields looking for land that might promise a richer claim.

"One day Kid got tired of digging. It was a long, hot day and Kid had only the best intentions for himself and his uncle. He told him they should head back to Tennessee, that in all the months they'd been in California no-one had made a big find. Uncle had a wife waiting for him, and Kid had friends. Uncle didn't take to it real well. He screamed, threw Kid's gold pans as far as he could hurl. Uncle Sanderson got mad."

West clicked his tongue. "He musta been sore."

"Hell boy, anyone can get sore. It takes a real special kinda man to go mad like Uncle Sanderson. He made such a ruckus the other prospectors were coming to hold him down when he suddenly got silent. He picked up the shovel he'd thrown away and began to dig, never taking his terrible eyes off Kid. He dug an' dug an' dug, looking for a vein of gold that wasn't there.

"But as it happened, it was. He dug up a huge nugget, big as a man's head, jus' like he said he would. 'James K. Polk!' he said. Again an' again screaming, 'James K. Polk!' The man was obsessed with the idea the nugget he found was the spit 'n' image of the President of the United States. He holed up with that thing, wouldn't let it outta his sight. He had to make it perfect, hammer it, chisel it, mold it into perfection.

"Kid tried to talk him outta it, tried to get him to see sense and go back to Tennessee where their family was waiting. And while he spoke to Uncle, the Indian witch snuck into Uncle's tent and stole the gold head of James K. Polk. She replaced it with a fool's gold copy, perfect in every detail, so Uncle could never tell the difference.

"The strain of his madness was too much for Uncle, the old man's heart gave out on him. But before he died, he grabbed onta Kid and made the poor boy promise to protect the gold nugget at any cost. Uncle died believing it was the real thing, but Kid found out someone had taken the real bust and left a fake. Kid Sanderson's an old man now, but he's still wandering around the California hills, whistling to himself at all hours. I never met him, but I can hear him still looking for the bust of James K. Polk he promised to protect."

The old man finished talking and looked over at the hills. He brushed his hand against his trousers where the dust rose up in great puffs. West realized how late it was and the farmer, sucking his teeth, seemed to realise the same thing. He picked up his tools and offered West dinner, but West refused. Dusk was already upon them and he wanted to return to his campsite. He would have told a lie if he said he weren't curious about Kid Sanderson. Someone had whistled his way into West's dreams the night before. He was half inclined to find this Sanderson, but half afraid. If it was going to happen, then so be it. He would wait and see if the whistling came again and if it was near enough to find. Otherwise, it was a good story but this Sanderson would probably never cross his path again.

The ashes were cold by the time he got back. West held out a stick and struck it against the stone fire ring. A snake had been warming itself on the heat in the rocks. When West disturbed it, the snake slid off into the forest.

He stopped hitting the rocks and the tapping stopped. He tapped a few more times and after each he heard something tapping along with him. He tapped once. A second later something else made a noise in the forest. West tapped again, and this time the voice from the forest burst out in a colorful array of chirps and tweets and whistles.

"Who's there?"

"An old man," said the voice, cracking under the weight of the words. "An old man looking for a friend." As he spoke the old man ambled out of the shadows and into the grove where West was camped. His feathers were patchy and all over he was encrusted with dirt and twigs. But his eyes were kind. West relaxed. "Pleasure to have the company of a young man with such a fine head on his shoulders. What's yer name, son? Been years since I saw anyone in these parts."

"Darrow West," he said.

The old man extended his wing. "Silas Sanderson. A pleasure to make yer acquaintance, son." West shivered. "Yer gonna get yerself dead a' cold out here. Yer got a camp or what?"

"Yes," said West. "I mean, let me get this fire going, I reckon it'll be more comfy then."

Sanderson waved derisively. "Yer'll never get warm out

here, squirrel. Yer can take my word on that as a gennleman, I been out here long enough. Come with me, got a cave 'bout a mile from here. Got protection from the wind, all the accoutrements a' home, and a fire you can roast walnuts over."

As Sanderson started to lead the way West went to put down his stick. Then he thought better of it and, tightening his grip until the bark drove into his skin, followed the old man through the night. By the time they reached his cave it was dark but for the light of the fire inside.

"Not much," said Sanderson, "but good enough for an old man like me. Come in so's I can get a better look at yer."

"I spoke to a farmer a couple a miles down the road," said West. "Nice fella. He told me you moved here in the rush in '49."

"Hah," he said. "What'd he tell yer? I'm just as mad as my poor uncle?" West nodded quietly, but Sanderson only smiled. "My uncle died a lonely man, and mad as a cut snake. Adunno what sent him mad. Did everything I could to stick by him, but he had it in his head he was gonna make it big." Sanderson went distant. "But he was right. He was mad, but right. He found it, y'know, I don't know how he did it but out of all them men on that goldfield he found a nugget of solid gold. Until that Indian, that two-faced redskin stole it from him. That trollop. That hag."

"Surely she's dead now. . . ."

Sanderson spat. "I should be so lucky. She's still got it." He giggled for a second. "Yer'll never believe it," he said, "but it was the very image of President Polk. White hair, strong lines around the nose, a determined brow. . . . Step in a bit." He waved to West. "Get warm. Yer'll catch your death out there. I got some nuts against that wall, go grab some and we'll roast up a dinner for the both of us."

West held his stick tight and moved past the fire further into the cave. He saw something stacked against the cave wall and moved towards them, then stopped as his eyes adjusted. They were animal skulls, some stacked high and some which had fallen over and scattered on the ground. His shadow blocked most of them, but some had fallen far enough to catch the firelight and flicker in the darkness.

Sanderson saw his gaze and pre-empted his question. "Disappointments," he said. "People I thought were my friends but showed themselves to be frauds. Thieves. The resemblance was uncanny. It was like looking at a painting." He picked up a skull that had enough flesh left on it to let West know it had been a wolf. "They were the spit and image of James K. Polk—the fine nose, the noble brow. But when I took the bust of President Polk away from them, they just . . . rotted away." He whistled to himself under his breath, a quiet but swift chirping, and let the skull fall to the ground.

"Say," he said. "You've got fine features yourself. In this light and from this angle, you look almost like the President. Come closer, son, and let me have a better look. Mr. West, do you know, I believe the resemblance is remarkable. You are the dead spit and image of James K. Polk."

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THE WAY OF LEGENDS

by Bill "Hafoc" Rogers

"The floor looks good, Swabbo. You can buy yourself a drink after you've cleaned out the spittoons."

The silver coin spun glittering through the air, falling toward the mouth of the spittoon on the floor beside me. Before I could think, I reached out and snatched it. I turned from the bar and handed it to the mangy sea otter who had been pushing a mop across the floor. "Here," I said, pressing it into his palm.

His eyes met mine. I can't read anything in the eyes of the natives—well, not those of the Coast People, anyway. For an instant, though, I thought I saw some emotion in the depths of the otter's dark eyes.

His webbed hand closed around the dime. He nodded ever so slightly, dropped the dime into the pocket of his black canvas trousers, and bent down to pick up the spittoon. Carrying that and the mop, he walked away toward the rear of the establishment.

I turned back toward the bar, making sure not to speak until I wasn't facing the dapper wolf who had tossed the coin. "You should be careful where you toss things."

From the corner of my eye I could see that the smile on the wolf's lips never wavered, although it no longer touched his eyes or the posture of his ears. Perhaps his hackles were stirring. I know mine were.

Finally, I turned to lock my gaze with his for a moment. Dog against wolf, we all know how that's supposed to go. But I'm not exactly delicate. Usually I consider my bulk an inconvenience, but it's also kept me out of a few fights. If it is enough to make even a wolf think twice about taking me on, I won't complain about it too much.

The wolf kept his false smile, eventually breaking eye contact in a slow manner that said he was only doing it out of courtesy. Of course, not even the nose-numbing cologne he wore—we all did, back then, perfume being easier to come by than hot baths—could prevent my scenting the anger in him.

He had wanted dime to land in the spittoon. He'd wanted otter to have to reach into spit and tobacco juice, wrist deep, to get it.

"I'll remember that," the wolf said, in a way that could be taken as a threat or not, whichever I preferred. He flicked an imaginary speck from his vest. "What brings you to the Versailles Palace Saloon, Mister? . . ."

"London. John London. People call me Jack. I'm down from my claim. I'm only here to let off some steam. And you are?"

"Alexander Larsen. Captain Larsen to many, although some just call me Wolf." He waved a hand dismissively. "The Versailles Palace is a bit of a sideline for me. I'm into imports and exports. I started on the sea; still have a little schooner, the *Ghost,* and I run cargo up and down the coast in her when the mood or need strikes me."

I cursed inwardly. I knew of him, of course. Captain Larsen was the one person I had most wanted to avoid angering when

I came here today. So of course he was the one person I did anger. Somehow, it just figured.

He sipped his whiskey, which from the scent was pure, unadulterated Kentucky Bourbon; none of the stuff his men mixed up in the basement for him! "You seem to be blowing off steam with an unusual level of decorum," he said.

"I've seen too much hell up in the camps to want to raise more. I want to be civilized for a while. That's why I came to the most genteel saloon in San Francisco."

The Versailles Palace Saloon wasn't really genteel. True, it was near the waterfront, not in the Barbary Coast; that region, our district of vice, crime, and debauchery, is several blocks in from the bay along Pacific Street. But in truth the Versailles Palace wasn't that far from a Barbary Coast dive, either in distance or in what it provided. I thought complimenting his place might butter Larsen up a bit, though. It seemed to have worked. Now his smile seemed genuine again.

"We appreciate your business. If you need anything else while you're here, feel free to ask the staff. I'm sure we can provide whatever you'd like. You might like our gaming tables, for example."

"They offer good odds, then?"

He laughed, showing a set of very formidable teeth. "What a polite way of asking if my games are honest! Of course they are. A dog of your education and intelligence knows that a properly run gaming establishment has no need to cheat its customers. In the long run, Mr. London, nobody beats the house. You should remember that."

He touched the brim of his tall silk hat, and with a little nod, turned to go watch the wheel of fortune and the faro tables. I stayed at the bar and sipped my beer, making it last a long time, watching the crowd.

Finally I finished my beer and walked through a wide archway into the dancing parlor. A piano played. Dancing girls, almost the only females you could find in San Francisco in those days, danced with miners and townspeople. The girls wore scandalous gowns, with low necklines and hems at the ankles, sometimes even as high as the calves. You could see layers of brightly-colored petticoats beneath the skirts.

There was a smaller bar here, for the convenience of patrons who wanted to buy adulterated whiskey for themselves and colored sugar-water, also supposedly whiskey, for the girls. A more respectably dressed female stood behind it, selling drinks and dance tickets. "Good evening, Stranger," she said. Her accent sounded as if she might even have been French.

"I'd like to dance."

"The ticket is a dollar and a quarter." That was high, but then the Versailles was supposed to be a high-class establishment, so I wasn't surprised.

"All right. Could I dance with that lady there, the one in the green gown?"

"Ah, Antoinette. She is our most popular dancer, but I think you're in luck this evening. She is lovely, is it not so?"

"She's beautiful." And indeed she was. From her amber eyes, fur colors and the shape of her ears she had much of the Scots Border in her, but she was slimmer and more elegant than the typical "collie" of the glens.

The real trick of her beauty was how she presented herself. Her gown was as respectable as any you could have found in the most polite of society. She was what lonely miners really wanted; a reminder of the mothers, sisters, wives, and girlfriends they'd left behind. By showing reserve, she made herself irresistible. No wonder she was so popular!

The song ended. The lady known as Antoinette came to the bar, saying farewell to the starry-eyed miner who had been dancing with her.

"Your gentleman the next, Antoinette," the ticket-seller said. The lady known as Antoinette turned to me, smiled, and held out her hand. She seemed a bit stiff and unnatural when she saw me, but she handled her surprise well.

"Good evening, Stranger."

"Charmed to meet you." I brought her hand to my lips. "Shall we dance?"

"Of course."

This was a slow piece, a waltz. Smiles on our faces, we spun across the room toward the back corner. Nobody was near enough to watch or hear us except that otter, and he was busy sweeping the floor.

"They call you Antoinette here? I suppose 'Virginia' wouldn't work for a dancer at a place called the Versailles Palace."

"Why did you do this? You could have just come to visit me in my room."

"No, I don't think I could. It's better you don't meet your brother openly. I think you're in danger here, Virginia. That's why I came. Not to try to convince you to find 'respectable' work, even if you could; I don't think I care about what so-called polite society thinks any more than you do. I take your safety seriously, though."

"I'm safe here. Captain Larsen keeps watch on us all, and most of the gentlemen dancers are true gentlemen, as best they know how—except for the occasional big lug of a brother who stumbles in stinking of beer. How'd you find me, anyway?"

"Mother sent me a letter and told me you'd found work 'cooking' at a place called the Versailles. I got her letter inside one from Doctor Bunker. He says she's doing well. She still spends her time talking to 'spirits,' but she hasn't tried to kill herself lately."

"That's good to know."

"Virginia, please listen. This place is dangerous. I think you know that; otherwise, why didn't you tell me yourself that you were here? But if you don't know, then open your ears, open your nose. Even here I can smell fear and death. You say Larsen will protect you, but it's Larsen I fear. You're dancing on the edge of a cliff. Dance with lonely drunken miners if you must; it lets you send Mother money, and she'd thank you for that if she understood. But do it somewhere else. Please."

The song was ending. She nodded ever so slightly. Then

she walked me back to the side of the room, wearing her best professional smile. Again I bowed slightly and lifted her hand to my lips.

I went back to the main bar. It was full dark outside now, but the action in the saloon was just beginning to pick up. Larsen was talking to the bartender as I came over. He glanced at me, nodded slightly, and wandered away.

For a moment I had the feeling Larsen and the bartender might have been talking about me. That being the case, ordering and drinking my second beer of the evening was probably the most foolish thing I'd done in my life.

The first thing I knew was that there were gritty floorboards pressed to my face. I opened my eyes the tiniest bit. The light was dim, but I could see that I was in a cage. It smelled like fear, mildew, and the foul waters of the bay. There were other scents too; whale oil, opium, formaldehyde, raw alcohol.

"If he's that dangerous, just put him in the bay." That was a deep voice, as if from a big dog.

The voice that replied was Captain Larsen's. "No. Listen and learn. Going too far is as dangerous as not going far enough. Besides, a big fellow like him will bring me plenty of money from the captain of a ship sailing to China. That puts him out of the way as well as if I killed him. If he doesn't die on the voyage, he'll be gone for at least a year or two."

"And come back looking for revenge."

"If he's not broken. If he's strong enough to threaten me, me, when I own this town and everyone in it. And finally, above all, if we're still here. San Francisco is just another boom town. Another year and this town dies, while another boom town rises somewhere else. And that new town is where we will be, with different names if we need them. It's a wonderful place, the West, a land of endless golden opportunities, just like they say.

"In the meantime, he won't be troubling Antoinette. Fifty dollars a night she brings me, including the drinks she sells, and that's just until someone offers me enough money for her. Another year and she'll be gone too, and of course we won't have any idea where she went."

"How do you know she might go with him?"

"You couldn't see it? You disappoint me. He came here tonight just to speak with her, I'm sure of it. He only had two beers and one dance, and it had to be with her. They spoke, and whatever he said moved her. I could tell that much from clear across the Versailles, scent un-nosed. He's something important to her; an old lover, perhaps. But he must have wandered away before. She won't ask too many questions when he does it again."

"I still think he might be better off at the bottom of the bay."

" Well, perhaps. I'll consider it; easy enough to fall out of a rowboat on the way out to *Ghost.* Meanwhile, I have business to attend to. Stay on your guard."

I heard footpads walking across hollow floorboards. From somewhere not far away I heard shouting.

"Let me out!"

"Please, Mister . . ."

"Damn you, you can't . . ."

There was the sound of iron rattling against iron; an animal snarl from Larsen, the sound of something heavy striking flesh, and again, and again, then silence broken by a whimper.

I was half-conscious at best, and what I felt in my head was worse than the worst hangover I've ever had. But I still had enough presence of mind to lie still, keeping my eyes open only a slit. Moving silently, I tested the irons that held my wrists behind my back. They seemed a bit loose. I might be able to wiggle out of them. I had to escape. My life, and Virginia's, depended on it!

I heard a thump, another, and a rattle of iron. "Please . . ." Just that one word, then silence. Feet shuffled. To the side I could see them; the curly black fur of some working dog covered them. They moved forward nervously, then back.

"Mick?"

No answer.

The feet walked away to my left. Then another thump, a clatter of iron, the start of a scream that died down to a strangled gurgle.

"No! Don't kill them! Take them with you to the Vigilantes!"

"Let us out. Let us *out*!" The voice was female.

"I will, I just need the right key. There. No, haven't forgotten you either. There. Go. Get out of here, go for the Vigilance Committee's headquarters. Rouse the guards, turn out the militia, tell your story and make them hunt down Larsen, don't let him escape again! Hurry!"

I sat up in the cage. I tried to stand, but my wrists held me down. I heard footsteps coming, and then the otter from the Versailles hurried in. He was carrying a toolbox and a carpetbag. A bundle of keys on a string dangled from the rope that held up his trousers in place of a belt.

" There you are," he said. "I let them all go, but I wanted to find you. He chained you to the floor? I was afraid he might." He found the key, opened the cage, came in, and rattled around inside the toolbox for a few seconds before he began jerking on my irons with something. "The rivets are soft, I can cut them."

"Why did you come?" I was surprised that one of the Shore People could speak European as well as I could. On the stage they only say "ugh" or "How!"—but then on the stage they're only dogs with clipped fur, bound-down ears, and paint. And what we see on stage is all we think we know about them.

"You reminded me that even among dogs there are good people. I needed to remember that. And you are trying to help your sister."

"How did you know?"

"You think dogs are the only ones with good noses? My people are hunters too. Yet Larsen—" he made the name a curse—"Larsen treats me like prey. Prey, me. Let us meet in

the water, just once, and then let us see who comes up for air. Antoinette, if that's her name, is your sister. I can smell it on you. I can see it in your eyes."

He grunted, jerking the irons. They hurt. "Your sister," he said, almost to himself rather than me. "I had sisters once. There were many of us in the village, and for generations we had come to San Francisco to trade with the dogs from over the sea. And then the dogs found gold in the riverbeds and the city grew.

"The hill people, the deer and sheep people, retreated into the mountains as the city grew. The Shore People sailed away and landed up and down the coast. But some of us stayed."

He heaved. Something popped and my right wrist was free. He moved to my other side.

"We stayed because they trusted the words of . . . a fool who should have known better. But the city fouled the bay. The fish and shellfish died, and what remained were tainted. Hunger came, and disease, and death.

"Stay, he said. Stay and there will be a house on shore where it's dry, and fires to keep us warm in the cold months. We can trade with the dog people, we can have boats and tools to build more, we can have bright fishhooks. Any fool should have known there was nothing here but death. The fool should have known. I should have known."

The other rivet snapped and I was free. I turned to look at him. There were tears in his eyes. "It is too late for my sisters. Go save yours. Get her away from here. This city is a festering sore on the face of Mother Earth. It will never be anything but a place of disease and death."

We walked out of the cage. He left the toolbox, but carried the heavy carpetbag. We were in what looked like the lower level of a warehouse, built of heavy frames and thick planks. Two or three oil lamps provided weak light across a myriad of crates and barrels. Almost at our feet, an open trap door showed a ladder going down to a dock in the water.

"Behind those crates over there you'll find a doorway. A few feet along is the stairway to the warehouse; the tunnel itself goes on to the Versailles. There were only two guards, one there, one here at the trapdoor. Go."

"You're not coming with me?"

He spat and hefted that carpetbag. "The trap door is my way out. I will ruin Larsen for what he has done to myself and my people. I found who had been shooting my people and why, Dog-Friend. I found their skins, tanned and baled to be shipped off to make coats! *My people*! And we are not dogs, so nobody in this city would think that is even a crime. I came here to kill him, I would kill him if I could . . . but I will ruin him instead, if I must. This gold came from the water and brought nothing but evil. It will go beneath the water, and its evil will end."

I hesitated. The bag of dust I had carried stitched to my own belt was gone. Without any gold, I didn't know what might happen to Virginia or myself. But no. The pain and anger in the otter's eyes decided it. If he wanted to sink Larsen's gold into the Bay he had surely earned the right.

Something exploded. The otter choked back a scream. He fell through the trap door. I heard his body hit the dock below, and then a splash. I heard a curse, a thump, another pistol shot, the ball striking a beam above my head this time. Somebody was clinging to the ladder. The falling otter had nearly knocked him off, but even as he struggled for his grip he was trying to point a long-barreled pistol at me.

I stepped back from the trap, out of the line of fire. Captain Larsen came up the ladder and into the warehouse. He aimed his pistol.

The world lost its color. I heard a snarl that was almost a roar. Something hit me—or had I hit it? A crash, the smell of hot whale oil, heat of a growing fire. The roar of a pistol shot, the pain of a flash burn along my side. There was something jerking on my teeth, jerking them hard, something furry filling my mouth. There was a hot, coppery taste. The fur of my face was soaked.

I blinked and caught my breath. Somehow, Captain Larsen had ended up on the rough floorboards beneath me. Blood spread from his torn throat. He looked dead.

Dazed, sickened, I turned away from the scene. My head was spinning and I didn't know what to do. The fire was spreading. Was there anything I could do to put it out before it took the whole warehouse with it, and maybe the whole city? No, and with those barrels I'd better just run. Whatever was in them—gunpowder, opium, raw alcohol—odds were I wouldn't want to be here when it caught fire.

I turned to run and something hit me in the back. There was a biting pain. It woke me out of my daze.

I stood to my full height and turned. Larsen wasn't dead. Clutching his throat with one hand, he was reaching his other toward the pistol, which was resting on the floor a few feet away from him. It was one of the new Naval Caliber Colt's Patent Revolving Pistols, which explained how he had managed to fire one pistol three times without reloading.

I growled. It was a horrible sound. Reaching behind me, I grabbed the handle of the knife he'd thrown and wrenched it out. It had spent most of its energy on my canvas jacket and the thick fur beneath, but pulling it free like that must have looked impressive. I held it in my hand, then, and took a fighting stance. I'd faced someone with a knife in my hand before. I think it showed.

He could probably grab the Colt's from the floor and shoot me down before I could reach him. Probably. But his eyes said he wasn't sure. He smiled, then, and flipped me a little salute, grabbed the carpetbag of gold, and jumped down through the trap door. I heard him hit the dock, I heard thumps and scrapings. I caught a glimpse of his shoulder, a bloody hand pulling an oar, and the side of a rowboat gliding away, heading out to sea.

I turned to run. But then I stopped, turned, and grabbed the Colt's pistol from the floor, because a pistol in the hand was the only law I could trust. Only then did I run away.

Virginia was in the Versailles Palace Saloon, so I knew

which path I had to take for my escape. The tunnel to the saloon came up through a trap door in its back storeroom. The storeroom door was locked, but I had no patience for trifles like that; I just ran straight through it.

The place fell silent, as you can well imagine might happen when a tattered, burned, smoky, bloodstained, hatless and wild-eyed stranger comes crashing in, brandishing a revolver and trailing splinters of a wrecked door. "Get out of the building," I said in a normal voice, but it was so quiet anybody in the saloon's main bar room could have heard it. "There's a fire in the warehouse behind us, and it's coming this way. There's time to get out, so don't panic, but get everybody out now."

Virginia came out of the dancing parlor with someone who looked quite a bit like the Mayor. Whoever he was, he hid his face and hurried away. "Jack! What are you . . ."

"Virginia, we have to get everyone out of here immediately." Somewhere, something went boom. I felt the thud through the floorboards.

"I knew you'd try something to end my job here."

I jammed the revolver into my belt and grabbed her by the elbow then. "We have no time! A fire is coming. Really." I could smell the smoke. I must have left the trap door open in the storeroom.

Her eyes widened. "You're covered in blood! What have you done?"

"Never, *ever* ask me that." But the way I said it was more like a plea than a demand. I remembered the horrible roar I'd heard, the beast who tore out Larsen's throat, the taste of Larsen's blood, and it sickened me. "I didn't kill, and I didn't set the fire, but . . . never ask me more. Never."

It was she who took my elbow then, and I think she might have been trying to hold me up. My memories of that, and the rest of the evening, have a soft and dreamlike quality, edged in fever and pain.

But I do remember walking down the street toward the more respectable parts of town, with Virginia at my side, the moon above, and a growing uproar and glare of fire behind us. We had left the Versailles Palace and the world of Captain Alexander Larsen behind. Nothing else mattered.

The years have been good to San Francisco. She has become a sprightly yet respectable lady. But even a respectable lady can be happy that her grandfather was a pirate. And so, in a strange way, the years have been good to Captain Alexander Larsen too.

Today's San Franciscans remember him as a charming rogue, smart, brave, and tough. All of that he was. He was also a cold-hearted, murderous bastard who would kill thinking people to get the stuff to make a coat. Today's citizens have dismissed that part of him. Such is the way of legends.

His mysterious disappearance only added to his legend. In the morning, *Ghost* was gone from the bay. Sailors aboard two ships saw her on the Pacific, sailing north under the full moon, disappearing into a fog bank, as superstitious sailors have reported seeing her on moonlit nights ever since. Somebody must have been sailing her. But if Larsen was aboard her, nobody can prove it. Nobody has heard from him since.

I will not complain of legends, for they, and the years, have been good to me, too. For I didn't find my fortune by panning streams, nor in mining the miners. No, the gold I found, the gold that let me raise my children and keep my late, beloved wife in a certain amount of luxury, came from the legends I myself wrote.

The favor the public shows my stories is not deserved. My stories, my tales of loping across the plains hunting buffalo with the Sioux, of duels on dusty Western streets, of sailing aboard clipper ships to China, I imagined, pure and simple. Yet my readers say "He was there!" and marvel at the authenticity of it all. That too is the way of legends.

My children are on their own, and prosperous. I have my house on Nob Hill. I have San Francisco and a bit more celebrity than I wish. Virginia keeps trying to introduce me to suitable ladies—imagine that, Virginia of all people, trying to encourage me to do the conventional things society expects! But I have become comfortable living here as a widower. Gods help me, I have become old and respectable.

Perhaps, just perhaps, I am not too old for one last adventure. The wild calls to me. To the north, in Alaska, lies our last frontier. There lie vast forests beneath the lights of the Aurora. Somewhere there, perhaps, one might find the glitter of golden flakes in the bed of a clear brook. There I could find adventure and lose myself in a vast, cold wilderness.

Along the way, I might settle an old mystery, if I wished. A sea captain I know gave me a clue toward the solution of that mystery in a tale of the Inland Passage he once told me.

It seems that many years ago—he wasn't sure how many, but Russia still owned Alaska then—a fine little American-built schooner with a crew of Shore People began trading among the many islands south of Juneau. Their Captain kept to himself, but he was brave and respected. He made a name for himself with the rescue of the survivors of the steamer *Mary Doane,* thrown onto the rocks by a gale. After some years he sold his ship and disappeared, probably into one of the Shore People villages in the islands.

I would like to he was the otter who rescued me. I would like to think that it was he who sailed the *Ghost* out of San Francisco Bay and then northward under the moon. I would like to think he found a new home in Alaska, and perhaps even happiness. Surely he deserved them.

But if I met him again, it would only bring him memories of despair, loss, and horror. So I will never seek him out. It saddens me that we will never meet again.

That is not the saddest thing. For if, as they say, the truest test of devotion is what you are willing to risk for another, that sea otter may have been the greatest friend of my life. And even now it brings a tear to my eye that I never even knew his name.

Elliott's Spring Gathering
— 2010 —

His Majesty, King Elliott Ingonyama the First,* cordially invites you to his next Royal Festival: **Elliott's Spring Gathering 2010**. As always, this event will feature a wide variety of activities and special events for guests of all ages. Included free with all three day registrations are the following special events:

Friday: King Elliott's guests return to Fun Spot USA, where they will receive a wristband for unlimted Go-Kart-ing and rides on most of the other attractions. Each participant will also receive lunch and a free round of mini-golf. Once again, fursuits and costumes are welcome.

Saturday: The Fursuit Head Construction Clinic. Back by popular demand, this event is hosted by several well known fursuit creators. Participants will be learn to make fursuit heads and will end the session with a fursuit head they can finish on their own. This session will last 4 hours and will be open to the first 20 guests to register. All materials will be provided.

Sunday Morning: Simba Live! Our own Simba and possibly a guest or two will prepare breakfast for all our guests.

Sunday: King Elliott's Party will once again return to Orlando's Wet 'n Wild for the third year in a row. As always, this will include a full dinner buffet and two hours of private time in the park exclusively for His Majesty's Guests.

In addition to these special events, His Majesty will provide those things His events always include:

An Artisans' and Dealers' Marketplace where artisans from the world over (including several who have never been to the United States before), will be able to display and sell their goods.

A video and pinball game arcade, featuring both current game consoles and many classic arcade and pinball games.

Fursuiting, Cosplay and other costume activities with a dedicated changing room for participants.

Fursuit/Costume portraits: Lifesize prints will be available for the cost of materials.

King Elliott has arranged special rates at the host hotel. Rooms will cost $60 a night (for up to four guests in a room). No guest should feel that staying in the host hotel is required.

Event Time and Place:

Friday, May 21, 2010 (starting 10am EST) through Sunday, May 23, 2010 (9pm EST) in the Metro Orlando Area, Florida, USA

Hotel Information:

Radisson World Gate Hotel
3011 Maingate Lane • Kissimmee, FL 34747
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(866) 705-7676 — Ask for **Elliott's Live Events** rate

For more information and updated news, visit our web site:
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†This invitation's wording is in the spirit of fun, like the event it represents.

▲King Elliott guards his guests at Wet 'n Wild

▲Some of King Elliott's Artisan guests

◀▼King Elliott's Guests enjoying Fun Spot USA

▼Simba cooks breakfast

Elliott's Spring Gathering 2010

Friday, May 21 thru Sunday, May 23, 2010
in the Metro Orlando Area, Florida, USA

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▲King Elliott's friends from Avenue Q after their performance at Elliott's Spring Gathering 2009

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THE HOUNDS

by Sean Silva

"How goes it there, friend . . . why the long face?"

Grady squeezed the handle of his mug a little tighter with that comment. It never failed. No matter where he went, there was always somebody who couldn't resist blurting out that stupid horse joke.

"Ya know what . . . friend," Grady mumbled in his gravelly voice, trying not to sound too harsh as his tail began whipping against the sides of his pants, "that joke wasn't funny the first five hundred times I heard it. So what makes ya think hearin' it outta your mouth would be any different?"

"Oh, well—I . . . I'm sorry, sir. Wasn't ever that good at making introductions and all," the stranger responded, but this time there was apprehension in his tone. Good.

"How 'bout we cut to the chase? Am I supposed to know you or somethin'?"

"No, but—Samuel told me I could find you here. He said just look for the big brown stallion with a white mane."

"Yeah . . . well, he forgot to add that it was graying."

Grady finally caught a good whiff of the stranger's scent as he sat down next to him. And how'd he guess it—a gosh-darn fox. Always the dang foxes trying to be the comedians.

"So, are you the kid that was lookin' for work?" Grady asked, trying to make his voice sound more pleasant.

"Yep. Rupert T. Moss, at your service," the fox replied as he extended an open paw across his body.

Grady looked at Rupert's outstretched arm, only to briefly glance up and make eye contact with the young tod before turning back to his drink. After a few more seconds, the vulpine awkwardly dropped his arm onto the counter.

"The name's Grady Jackson; you'll be helpin' me take supplies up to a claim on the Feather River."

"Sounds good," Rupert muttered while staring as his paws. After a few seconds, he anxiously started rapping his claws against the wood.

"Foxes make for good diggers, right? You guys are supposed to have the instincts for it—and good noses from what I hear."

That grabbed the kid's attention. "Absolutely."

"Then you'll work out fine."

"Oh . . . okay. So it's just us then, huh?"

"For now," Grady replied, frowning at his nearly empty mug. "Got a couple a buddies comin' from the valley. They should be up there in a few days."

Rupert nodded before taking a moment to look around the bar.

The fox could almost smell the tension inside the dingy, dark establishment, and as his eyes wandered through the rough crowd, he couldn't help but notice the diversity of its patrons. There were badgers, moles, foxes, steer, horses, mules, and even a few canines scattered around the place; all of which appeared to be stout workers, or the kind of folks nature had blessed with the instincts to burrow and tunnel. Eventually, Rupert's eyes met the piercing glare of a fierce-looking badger at a corner table, and the fox quickly shifted his sights back to the bar. For the time being, it just felt safer to stare at his paws again.

"S—so . . . is it—you know . . . always like this around here?" Rupert asked, unable to hide his stammer.

Grady raised his now-empty mug and shook it, trying to catch the bartender's attention. "This ain't a place for the faint of heart, kid, especially when gettin' rich is involved. It tends to bring out the worst in people."

"You mean everyone here's looking for gold?"

"Yep. And they all left somethin' behind for it, too. Jobs, family . . . that sort of uncertainty adds to the tension. Makes people . . . nervous. Amongst other things."

"Wow. I had no idea it was like this."

Finally, the bartender brought Grady another drink. About time. "So, kid, tell me what you left behind?"

"Not much, really, just a fiancée in San Francisco. Didn't have much going on in terms of work except for a few odd end jobs, and they weren't anything special."

"That usually ain't the case," Grady said as he leaned forward, looking over at a fox and a mule seated near the far end of the bar. "Mason over there, he quit his job at the shipyard to go diggin'. And the boy there next to him—name's Brannan, I think. He was a writer for the *California Star*."

"The newspaper?"

"That be the one. I think they stopped publication of it."

"How come?"

"Ain't nobody workin' there any more. They all left to get rich."

"I guess this is the kinda opportunity you don't wanna let pass you by."

"I reckon so."

Just then, a loud bang resonated through the bar and everyone turned toward the entrance. A group of three canines marched into the establishment and immediately scanned the room with tense eyes and a few snarls. Rupert was quick to notice that most of the patrons turned away or went back to their quiet conversations. Even Grady had shifted back to the bar.

"Turn around, kid," Grady whispered, trying his best to sound pleasant in case the dogs overheard him. Luckily, Rupert did as he was told.

"Who are . . ." Rupert started to ask as he hunched closer to the stallion and motioned his head ever so slightly toward the canines.

"The Hounds."

"Are they—"

"Jus keep your dang muzzle shut."

"Grady! You got somethin' ta say to me?" a voice growled from the entryway, causing the stallion's ear to twitch.

Grady quietly cursed his luck as he heard footsteps approaching from behind. He slowly set his glass down and swiveled around on his stool, trying not to make any sudden movements. It was Howard, one of The Hounds' unofficial leaders. The burly Rottweiler had two German Shepherds at his sides, both of them with their arms crossed as if awaiting orders. Typical gang followers.

"What's the matter with you, Grady? You think I can't hear ya whisperin' from all the way over there?" Howard questioned as he carefully sized up the thick stallion with his eyes.

"I was jus gettin' ready to explain some things to my young friend here, that's all," Grady replied, glancing at Rupert out of the corner of his eye.

"Explain what?"

"How there ain't no foreigners in here today, Howard . . . and ain't nobody lookin' for any trouble either."

"Who said anything about them good-for-nothin' immigrants? Sure as heck wasn't me." The muscular Rottweiler couldn't help bearing his teeth after that statement, and Grady had to wonder if it was meant as a smile, or a growl. "Most of them dang foreigners got the picture that they ain't wanted in our country. The Hounds have been doin' a mighty good job chasin' 'em out."

"So what's your business in here then?"

"Oh, you ain't heard? The Hounds are expandin', Grady. We've decided it was time to do the locals here a favor, so we're gonna start protectin' them from all those dirty immigrants tryin' to take their gold. For a small fee, of course."

Grady breathed heavily out his nostrils. He was tempted to stand up, but he kept calm and remained seated, even forcing his tail not to whip. "Ain't nobody in here needs protection, Howard. Especially me."

"I didn't say you had a choice, now did I?" This time, Howard definitely let out a snarl.

That's when another clang echoed from the entrance, and everyone turned to see Sheriff Bowery tapping the barrel of his revolver against the wood frame. "Excuse me, fellahs, but . . . are we havin' a problem here?" the Sheriff asked, taking a long, hard look at Howard and his cronies. Vultures had a way of piercing you with that stare. It was enough to make the dead crawl.

"Not at all, Sheriff. Not-at-all."

"Then if ya'll didn't come to drink, I suggest you and your buddies mosey on outta here. I don't need any problems today."

"Sure thing, Sheriff. As a matter a fact, we were just leavin'." Howard turned to look at Grady once more before whispering, "We'll be comin' through here again, so . . . you and your little friend better pay up or get outta town—if you know what's good for ya."

With that, the three canines walked out of the bar, and the Sheriff made sure he was following closely in stride. Their departure definitely left the place quieter, but the tension inside the establishment was thicker than it had ever been before. Grady decided that was his cue to leave.

"Let's go, kid. I think it's time we got a head start," Grady said as he stood up and started digging in his pants pocket.

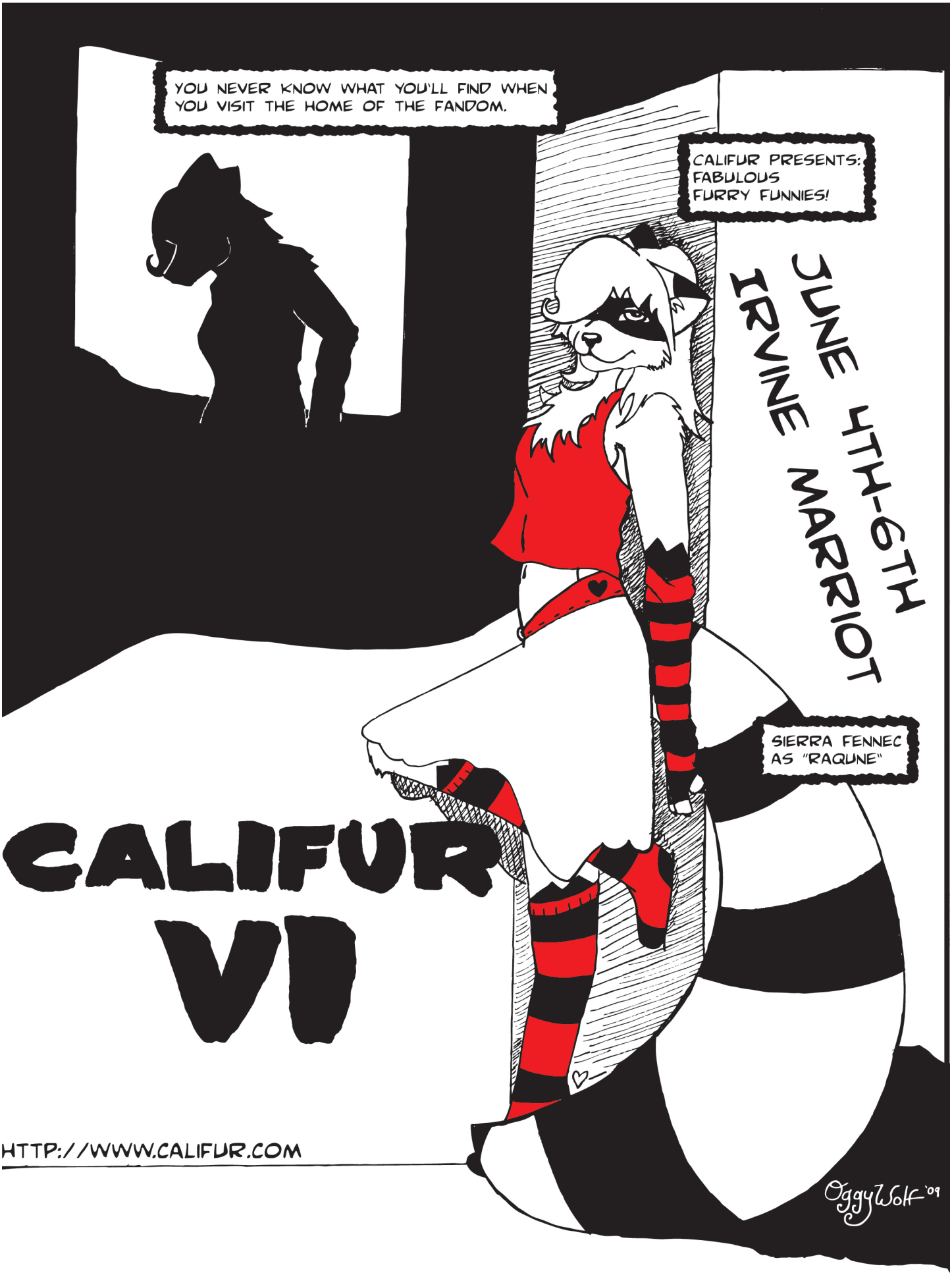
"You really think those guys are coming back?"

"Until something changes . . . they'll keep comin' back. But one of these days, The Hounds are gonna take things too far. And when they do, those thugs will get what's comin' to 'em," Grady grumbled as he pulled out a small piece of gold and tossed it onto the counter.

The young tod eyed the shiny piece of metal for a few seconds before turning back to Grady, who was giving the fox a half smile.

"There'll be plenty more where that came from when we get up northern. So come on, kid, we got ourselves some work to do."

Based on the anti-foreigner gang officially called the San Francisco Society of Regulators, *who would later become known as* The Hounds.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BECKKY BUNNY PANS A PROSPECTOR

Written and illustrated by James L. Brandt

During the California Gold Rush, the beauty and renewable natural resources of the great state were overlooked in an all-consuming, single-minded compulsion to capitalise on the simple fact that most people were convinced a certain rare element, hidden sporadically within the earth, was worth more than almost anything else in the world. But, even back then, not everybody who occupied the coastal area was there to chase a self-serving, get-rich-quick-or-die lifestyle.

Beckky Bunny was a mere sodbuster to the prospectors and claim jumpers. She worked a little truck farm that was growing progressively more successful each season. In fact, this particular season, she managed to get her carrot crop in early. After delivering her harvest to a local cannery, she pledged to help out her long-time friend and next-farm neighbor, Hazel.

That day, Beckky was out there on the dusty path, en route to Hazel Rabbit's farm with a buckboard full of empty vegetable crates that the two furs planned to use to carry another successful harvest to the local cannery. Plodding there in front of her, effortlessly pulling her wagon along, was her old, heavyset, mop-maned, Clydesdale-hoofed giant draft horse named Valentine. Retired from the local freightways, Val was still more than enough to do Beckky's work and earn his keep. The two became close friends in the bargain, so a day's work really didn't seem much like work at all.

"Val, this is livin', I gotta tell ya, pal," Beckky spoke to her equine comrade. "Sunny day, balmy breeze blowin' around the clouds and plenty of nature's finest to feed us all winter. All you have to do is take care of her, treat her right, and Mother Nature will provide anything we need."

The big horse neighed in agreement, nodding his head repeatedly, so strongly that the long mane flopped up and down upon his tree-trunk-thick neck.

Apparently, not everyone was willing to wait for Mother Nature to provide. From behind a large roadside boulder a chattering, nattering little red menace, wearing a gun belt, black vest and oversized hat, leapt into their path. He landed squarely between Val and the wagon, waving around what looked like two revolvers, sometimes in the air, sometimes at Beckky. It was hard to tell, he was moving so fast.

Beckky yanked on the reins and Val ground to a halt, almost screeching his huge horseshoes in the dirt.

"Hey, you little loony," Beckky cried, peering over the toe board of the wagon, down at the freaky little furry creature there before her. "Don't do that! We almost ran you over! Who the heck are you, anyway?"

"Me? Me!" shouted the angry California ground squirrel. "Why, everybody knows me! I'm Montana Joe, the meanest, toughest, full-boringest, rip-roaringest, doggone-worstiest, shoot'em-firstiest *hombre* whatever packed a pair of six-shooters."

Beckky looked down into the mad eyes of the diminutive lunatic. They glared up at her from beneath his oversized sombrero, framed by two pistols, clenched tightly in his little fists, the barrels pointing up at her appearing not unlike a second set of barmy eyeballs.

"You're watching too many rabbit cartoons," Beckky

assured the little nut.

Val was growing very annoyed. Alarmed by the idea of somebody pointing weapons at his driver, he moved slightly to present his powerful haunches and began to lift his massive, hairy left rear hoof, aiming to punt the antagonistic little squirrel clear into the twenty-first century.

"Easy, big boy," Beckky called softly to the horse, stopping his motions by pulling a bit on the reins. "Let me handle this one."

Valentine reluctantly held still, watching the confrontation.

"What can we do for you, fellah?" Beckky, with mock sweetness, requested of the squirrel.

"Fellah? Fellah!" the squirrel shouted, even angrier, now. "Don't you patronize me, there, varmint! I'm, uh . . . takin' over this here operation. Hijacked! That's what you are!"

"No, I'm Beckky Bunny, that's who I am," the lady lop told him sternly, "You're being very rude. Besides, I highly doubt that I have anything the likes of you would want."

"Oh, yeah, ya do!" Joe claimed loudly.

"Oh, no I don't," Beckky asserted.

"Ooh, yeah, ya sure do!" Joe demanded.

"I'm sure I don't," Beckky maintained.

Val was glowering back over his considerable rump at the two of them, in a standoff.

"Why don't you just let me step on the little creep?" his brown eyes begged Beckky.

"I knows you got plenty of empty crates in that wagon," Joe insisted ominously. "I done struck it, and I needs to get me find into town and collect. I hear them crates goes at least twenty-four carats each!"

The farm girl lop rolled her eyes toward the blue sky above. It was clear to her that this moron was thinking of entirely the wrong sort of carrots.

"Go soak your head," Beckky told him.

Joe did just that, albeit inadvertently. First, he charged around the left front wheel of the wagon, so quickly he left a dust cloud in his wake. Then he began jumping up and down again in a veritable frenzy of motion. He raised the pistols over his head to fire off warning shots.

Wursh! Suddenly he was greeted to a midday shower as a spray from his two worthless weapons soaked him with a gush of water.

"Arrgh!" Montana Joe shouted. "I uses me water guns to wash down me sluice boxes! And, I plumb packed the wrong dad-gum shootin' irons!"

Val still had his head turned around. He and his driver exchanged incredulous glances. Beckky merely spun a finger around her left temple, then she pointed at the frantic squirrel. Val nodded, again, his long mane waving in agreement.

The squirrel was ignoring them now, talking to himself and cussing up a storm.

"Hoofie, hoofie!" Beckky said to Valentine, shaking his reins twice. That gave the big horse the signal to start pulling the wagon again, and he did so steadily and smoothly, leaving the frenetic squirrel to pitch his fit, now jumping up and down on his squirt guns.

"Val, these kooks are never gonna get it right," she informed the horse as they rolled along, "until they figure out that the real gold is what you can grow in the ground, not what you can dig for underneath it."

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A LETTER FROM THE BOARD

Eureka! You've found it!

Welcome again to Further Confusion 2010.

We are all glad you could be with us in our new hotel, the beautiful Fairmont, in downtown San Jose—the first capital of the State of California during the Gold Rush, from 1849 to 1851, just a mere 160 years ago. As we are sure you are finding out, this new venue is, well . . . different; new just about everything. However, at this new venue we have tried to address the concerns of many folks over the last few years.

Folks asked for a larger hotel—and the Fairmont is just that. Folks asked that, if we had to have an overflow hotel (which, by the way, we didn't at first think we would need), it be closer to the main hotel. We did this also, adding the historic Hotel Sainte Claire, just one block from the Fairmont. In moving to this beautiful new place, we also were able to expand almost all the function space used by the convention.

In addition to all of this is the plethora of restaurants within walking distance of the Fairmont, as well as the wealth of clubs, museums, parks, and attractions in downtown San Jose. All this is connected by some of the best public transit anywhere. We hope you feel, as we do, that this was a move for the better for all of you, the attendees of Further Confusion.

This was also difficult for the staff that brings you Further Confusion; again, new just about everything. So we hope as you enjoy the facilities of the Fairmont and the surrounding area, that you can acknowledge all of the work that goes into a convention of this size, and the effort that has been made by all of the convention staff.

Again, welcome to Further Confusion 2010 and to San Jose.

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